

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

2. The examiner's amendment is being sent out merely to update the dependency of claim 9. Claim 9 depended upon canceled claim 8 in the previous examiner's amendment mailed on 6/20/08. Claim 9 is now amended to depend on claim 1 (as suggested by an informal communication faxed to Examiner Whipple by attorney Andrew Lee on 5/23/08).

3. The application's claims have been amended as follows:

1. A file server system comprising:
a plurality of hard disk drives communicatively coupled with a plurality of clients via a network, each hard disk drive in the plurality of hard disk drives including authentication information identifying one or more devices on the network that are permitted to directly communicate with said each hard disk drive; and

a file control unit communicatively coupled with a plurality of hard disk drives and the plurality of clients via the network, wherein the file control unit accepts requests from said plurality of clients to access said plurality of hard disk drives, thereby managing data input and output of said plurality of hard disk drives,

wherein said file control unit includes configuration information identifying one or more of said plurality of hard disk drives, and

wherein the file control unit is configured to:

 broadcast a hard disk drive search message to the plurality of hard disk drives via said network at each initialization of the file control unit,

 in response to the hard disk drive search message, receive from a hard disk drive, in the plurality of hard disk drives, ID information identifying the hard disk drive to said file control unit,

 if the ID information is found in the configuration information of the file control unit, send to the hard disk drive a command to establish an entry in the authentication information of the hard disk drive, wherein the entry prevents the hard disk drive from directly communicating with devices on said network other than said file control unit, and

wherein the authentication information for each said hard disk drive includes an ownership flag identifying a device on the network as an owner of said each hard

disk drive, and wherein the owner is permitted to modify the authentication
information of said each hard disk drive.

8. (Canceled)

9. The file server system according to claim 1,
wherein the file control unit allows a requesting device on the network to set the
ownership flag in the authentication information of any hard disk drive in the plurality of
hard disk drives in which no owner has been set yet.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Canceled)

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

4. In summary, claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of canceled claim 8.

Claim 9 has been amended to change its dependency from cancelled claim 8 to claim 1.

Additionally, claims 11-15 are canceled in order to expedite the case to allowance.

5. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: the limitations of claim 1 as a whole are not taught or suggested by the prior art in terms of a reasonable combination.

Specifically, the broadcasting of a hard disk drive search message to a plurality of hard disk drives via a network at each initialization of a corresponding file control unit for the hard disk drives is not taught or suggested by the prior art.

Additionally, the steps related to, in response to the hard disk drive search message, identifying a plurality of hard disk drives, and establishing ownership flags related to authentication for each hard disk drive and corresponding devices in the network, is not taught or suggested by the prior art.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brian P. Whipple whose telephone number is (571)270-1244. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri (9:30 AM to 6:00 PM EST).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Bunjob Jaroenchonwanit can be reached on (571) 272-3913. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Brian P. Whipple
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7/25/08

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